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10/13/77

Mr. Richard A. Davis
Director
Department of Human Resources
318 Public Service Building
Salem, Oregon 97310

Dear Mr. Davis:

Thank you for your letter of September 15 in which you outlined your views on the problems of resettling Indochinese Refugees in Oregon and the role you believe the Department of State should play in this important task.

First, I should explain the relationship between the Department of State and the voluntary agencies who are engaged in this resettlement program.

Some eight international voluntary agencies have agreed to assist the U.S. Government in its program for Indochina Refugees. This includes some initial screening in the various refugee camps overseas, identifying and vouching for a willing sponsor for each refugee family here in the United States and some initial follow-up of the refugees after they have arrived in their new communities. For this effort they are to receive a grant of $300 per refugee. It was not intended in either the present or preceding refugee programs that the voluntary agencies would, or should, be held responsible for the indefinite future for the refugees' welfare after the initial arrival and resettlement took place. It is obvious that the amount of money involved would only compensate for the initial activities of relocation. Neither the voluntary agencies, nor certainly the Department of State, have the staff required for such individual case work. That is why the Federal Government, through the Department of Health, Education and Welfare has provided 100% reimbursement to states for

their share of expenditures for financial and medical assistance to the refugees. All monies granted to the voluntary agencies are subject to U.S. Government audit to insure that the funds were spent on behalf of refugee resettlement; there is no performance audit, however, since it was not intended that the voluntary agencies act in a uniform fashion in providing initial resettlement assistance.

I can appreciate your concern about the additional refugees which you say are arriving each month in your state. It may be presumed that these families have left their original resettlement communities and sponsors in order to move to Oregon. The interstate movement of refugees is, of course, under no restrictions. Even with their limited resources, however, the voluntary agencies often try to assist these families who have changed locations.

We agree with your statement that the key to successful resettlement is the active involvement and commitment of sponsors to work personally with the refugees. Reports of various types reaching us from around the United States indicate that, for the most part, the resettlement program is working quite well; the reasons are many, but very important is the dedication of officials such as yourself who have assumed a deep, personal responsibility for the care and well-being of these refugees.

I would ask you further to work closely with the regional offices of HEW, who are charged with the domestic side of the refugee resettlement program. They have sponsored a number of significant, Federally funded programs to assist these new arrivals, and presently have a bill before the Congress to continue some Federal reimbursement for state programs assisting not only refugees who arrived since 1975, but also the 15,000 who are currently being admitted under the new parole program.

We shall probably never achieve 100 per cent success in our refugee resettlement efforts, since the human element would in any case obviate any set of carefully drawn rules and procedures. But I do believe that the great majority of refugees now in the United States have been well resettled through the real compassion and true generosity of the American people.

I appreciate your expression of concern and interest in this matter.

Sincerely,

Patricia M. Derian
Assistant Secretary for Human Rights
and Humanitarian Affairs

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